

DESCRIPTION OF THE PICTURE.



THE DEPARTURE OF THE ISRAELITES OUT OF EGYPT.

OPEN AT THE DIORAMA

AT NIBLO'S GARDEN, BROADWAY,

FROM 9 O'CLOCK 'TILL DUSK,

ADMITTANCE TWENTY-FIVE CENTS.

The general effect of the Picture is impressive and powerful in the extreme, and has been painted with such extraordinary illusion as to lead the mind to contemplate it as a subject of reality.

The Saloon from which Spectators view the Painting is made comfortably warm, and, from the arrangement of the lights, the Picture is seen to as great advantage in dull weather as fair.

BOOKS DESCRIPTIVE OF THE PICTURE

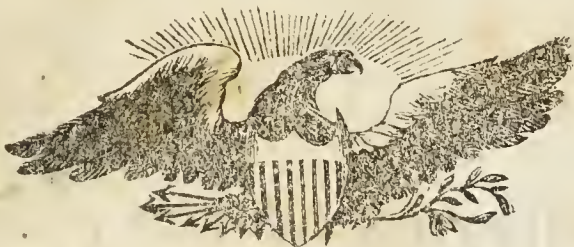
For Sale at the Ticket Office, Price 12½ Cents.

Young Ladies' Schools admitted on Moderate Terms.

Printed by J. Booth & Son, 147, Fulton-street, New-York.

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The Picture represents the dawn of day, the morning sun lighting on the gigantic Pyramids in the distance, then falling in slant lines across the stately Obelisks and Pinnacles which adorn the prodigious mass of Palaces and Temples which are richly imagined and exquisitely drawn.

On a raised terrace in the left foreground of the picture and in the gate of his Palace is seen Phareah, standing under a superb canopy of peacock feathers, surrounded by his court. Pharoah with evident amazement and consternation is contemplating the departure of the Israelites, which he dared not oppose. Opposite to him and in front of an enormous Egyptian statue, are the two leaders, Moses and Aaron, directing the route of the Hebrews, (which are supposed to have amounted to two millions, including men, women, and children,) while the space between the buildings, for an interminable distance appears filled with a continuous mass of Israelites, who are marching out in order with their *Banners, Ensigns, Camels, Flocks, and Elephants*. The tops of the Palaces, Towers, and Terraces, are crowded with Egyptians looking on.

THE DEPARTURE OF THE ISRAELITES.

*This subject is beautifully described in the following description,
from a tradition from the Coptic*

BLESSED be the memory of my father Amrou, and of his father Pithom, and of his father Zalapheel. I have built their sepulchre. I have anointed it, perfumed it, and sealed it with the seal of Osarsiph. The dragon, the falcon, and the crocodile, shall guard it from the hand of man. It shall remain for ten thousand years. Egypt shall be dust and ashes, and again she shall be glorious. Again Egypt shall be dust and ashes. She shall again be clothed in purple, and wave the sceptre over the land; from the stormy and ever rolling sea of the north to the hills where the sun looks down upon the crystal caverns and fathomless gold mines of Ethiopia, and the moon sows the soil with opaz and emeralds. And again Egypt shall be dust and ashes, before the hand of man shall unseal the triple guard of the sepulchre of my fathers.

In the chest that contains the mummy of my lord and honoured father, Amrou, I have laid the papyrus, which tells of the fate of his son in the most awful transaction of my country. It is not written for the eye of mortal man. But, when the ten thousand years of the sepulchre are fled like a dream, and the sages and warriors, the priests and kings, of Egypt, whom our love embalmed, shall come forth from the places of their rest, and, unswathing their immortal limbs from the mantles of silk wrought with the words of wisdom, and the golden network alone worthy to preserve the holy and the renowned, shall again behold the sun, and rejoice in the coming of the days of glory, and lead the nations of the earth to the oracles of wisdom; then shall I sit beside the waters of the Nile in the circle of my forefathers, and my children, even to the hundredth generation, and read the records of the days of our fame and our terrors under the lotus tree of immortality.

* * * * *

I was sitting in my tent, at the close of one of those lovely days which usher in the spring of our matchless land, when I was roused by the intelligence that a great tumult had begun among the slaves who worked in the fields. I listened with disdain to the idea, that those hereditary beasts of burthen, those tillers of the soil, those hewers of wood and drawers of water,

the abject Hebrews, could lift their eyes against the shining of the spears of Egypt. General of the fourth army of our illustrious kingdom, the army of the golden shield bearers, who had conquered all the tribes of Nubia and Ethiopia, from the edge of the desert to the highest ridge of the mountains, which make the girdle of the world, I only demanded a word from the footstool of the throne of my king, the son of a hundred kings, to crush those sons of rebellion like the ants of the desert, or scatter them wide like the ashes of the furnace to all the winds of heaven. I had just brought back the army from our conquest. It now lay encamped before me—a magnificent sight, spreading to the horizon, with its plunder, its prisoners, and the forest of waving and bright coloured banners torn from the diamond-turbaned kings of the mountains. Zaraph, the ancient prince of the dwellers in the East Oasis—that spot of living fountains, which looks green in the ocean of sand and fire never passed by man, and whose shores are marked only by the circle of eternity—was sitting at my feet, bound with a silver chain; he was the bravest of our enemies, and at the head of the bravest tribe. But what could withstand the shield-bearers of Egypt? His horsemen were overthrown, his tent was ashes, and his brazen-headed spear was as the willow in the hands of a child. In the scorn of the hour I demanded of my royal captive what he thought of the hope of those Hebrews to break their chains.

“There is no human hope,” said the ancient man, “while such an army as that before us lies ready to consume them, as flame consumes the chaff of the harvest floor.”

But he pronounced the words with a solemnity unsuited to my scorn; and I again asked him. “No *human* hope,” said I, “Prince of the Oasis of Zophir! and what other hope have they? Are they magicians? Can they call up spirits from the fire or the waves? Can they bring the thunder and the hail to fight for them? Can they call the great god Apis, to drive his people with his horns into the fathomless surges of the Western Sea?”

Zaraph was silent, but his eye was fixed above with a calm intensity, as if he gazed into the heights of heaven, and gazed less with his eye than his mind.

“Mighty chieftain of the mighty,” he at length said, and bowed his ancient brow before me, “invincible warrior, favoured pillar of the eternal throne of Misraim, how shall thy servant open the weary lips of age before the son of power and wisdom?”

I honoured the old man for his valour and his years, and, taking him by the hand, bade him speak all that rested on his soul.

“Prince, said he, “I am this day ninety years old; and it is not from the lips of him who longs to be silent forever that the words of falsehood should flow. But you are a warrior and you cannot know fear; you are a sage, and you must love truth. Then let the truth be told. The day of the evil of Egypt is at hand!”

I involuntarily half drew my scimeter. Disdain of the slaves whose eye should never have dared to lift itself from the dust of Egypt, and even resentment at the rashness of the prisoner who could offer this intolerable insult to the majesty of a kingdom as old as the stars and as imperishable as the foundation of the earth, flashed from my eyes and quivered in my frame. But the laws of Egypt made the prisoner sacred. Reluctantly I checked

my wrath; and, dashing the scimeter back into its sheath, bade him go through his whole tale of rebellion.

The old man saw my wrath, and, thrice bowing his turban to the ground, pronounced in an unchanged voice, "Let the pleasure of my lord be done upon his servant. But, since it is his command that I speak the truth, the truth shall be spoken. The forefathers of Zaraph—may they rest in the shadow of the stars, until the light of the last morning summons them to glory!—were lords of the dwellers in the mountains beyond the sands of Arabia. There they worshipped the lights of heaven. But a stranger came among them, from the lands beyond the Euphrates—a man of years, of great wealth, and of exceeding wisdom. He was rich in flocks and herds; yet our hand was held back from him. He was bold in his indignation at our altars, yet no man's spear was raised against him. He declared that the time should come when our altars were to be thrown down, our tents turned into coals of fire, and our tribe scattered like the leaves of the date-tree when the fruit has fallen."

"And was there no warrior among you?" I exclaimed, "to slay the teller of those evil tidings?"

"All were warriors among us," said the old man, with a look that reminded me of his countenance when I saw him fighting at the head of his fierce horsemen. "But there was a power round the stranger that blunted the edge of our wild fury. He told us of things beyond the thought of man; of the beginnings of the heavens and earth; of the place of happiness in which our first ancestors dwelt—lovely as the spirits of heaven, and pure as the dew before it reddens in the dawn—the sovereigns of the earth crowned with more than the gold and jewels of earth's kings; crowned with the supremacy of beauty, of eternal youth, of unclouded wisdom, of the heirship of glories, to which the moon in her midnight splendour, and the sun in his noonday strength, is pale. The altars of my fathers were smitten down by his hand; the wisdom of our wise men was turned into folly before his mighty words. He was filled with the dark knowledge of things not yet conceived in the womb of the ages of the world. All wondered, many worshipped, and some followed his footsteps through the borders of the land. We would have made him our king; but he declared that he was to be a pilgrim; to wander from land to land, telling the high mysteries of times past and times to come; till, at length, having reached the spot where his course was to be finished, he should there become the father of a nation, vast as the leaves of the forest for number, powerful as the storms of the desert for strength, and bright as the stars of heaven for glory."

The old Arab remained with lips moving in secret prayer, his hands uplifted, and his fading eyes fixed, as if he saw some of those descending shapes in which the Gods once visited our fathers. It was impossible to look upon him without reverence; and I felt awed by the solemn sincerity of the silver-haired enthusiast. But, was I, the chief of warriors, to be overcome by the superstition of slaves?

"Prince," I said, after a pause, "yours is the land of strange things.—The man was a Chaldee, he was a sorcerer, he laid his spells upon your senses. Here we should not have been so willing to listen, and thus not so easy to be deceived. If the slaves have rebelled, their rebellion must be punished; if their sorcerers attempt to mislead them, their sorcerers must

be convicted by the wisdom of our wise men, and then put to the death that they deserve.

Our conference was broken off by a sound of a trampling of cavalry. The beating of their shields, and the braying of their trumpets, announced a messenger from the king. Arioch, the royal chamberlain, was the bearer of the message, wrapped in its case of purple. It was a command to march straight for Memphis. The old prince of the Oasis cast a look of sorrow round him, as I read the order; while I involuntarily smiled at the coming disappointment of his prediction. "Not for myself mighty chieftain," said he, "do I grieve, but for my lord Pharaoh, in whose hands is the life of his people; not for the rebellious sons of the Hebrews, but for the wise, the wealthy, and the prosperous, the sons of Egypt."

The trumpets of the army now sounded for our march without delay. I mounted my star-fronted charger, and was on the point of spurring at the head of my ten thousand cavalry across the plain, when Zaraph, with almost the vigour of youth, sprang to my foot, and, embracing it said, "Chief-tain, you have been generous to the vanquished, and the sorrows of the captive shall never fall in tears of doubled sorrows on your head. Hear me, then, for the last time. Shed no drop of Hebrew blood! Counsel your king as you will; hate, scorn, deride the rebellion, as you will; but, again I say to you, let not your scimitar redden with a drop of Hebrew blood. There is a man of wonders among the people. He has seen sights like those shown to the great pilgrim of my fathers. He has been where no other foot of man could tread and live. He has walked in the furnace unconsumed; as the Hebrews have walked on the embers of affliction, and yet survive. He comes alone, but he comes with more than armies. His strength is as the feebleness of second childhood; but vain will be the strength of thrones before him! He comes without silver or gold; but the silver and gold of Egypt will be before him as the dust that he tramples with his feet. He comes without the spear in his hand or the shield upon his bosom; but before him the host of Egypt, the conquerors of the mountain, the desert, and the ocean, will be as the bramble of the mountain before the lightning, the sands of the desert before the whirlwind, and the weeds of the ocean before the storm."

His words were pronounced with a deep sincerity which sank into my heart. But this was not the time for a soldier of Egypt to pause. The glittering squadrons of the royal guard now passed before me—a superb sight. All human feelings, but those of glory, were extinguished in the blaze of their armour and the tossing of their dragon banners. I was all the warrior again. I gave the word "Onward!" It was echoed by ten thousand voices. I gave the reins to my charge, and onward we poured. like a cataract let loose from its precipice, rushing, splendid, and irresistible.

* * * * *

It was morning when the sound of the harpers and minstrels that salute the rising of the great lord of the heavens brought me with my horsemen before the city gates. I rode straightway to the palace, and prostrated myself before the footstool of the descendant of the conqueror of conquerors, the lamp of wisdom, and brother of heaven, Pharaoh, the king of the kings of earth. But his countenance was troubled, and no words issued from his lips. All the lords of Misraim stood before him, and all trembled

at the tempest that gathered on his brow, and the fires that flashed from his eye.

At length he burst forth in a voice of scornful rage. "Let the rebel be brought before his king; let the slave come and defy the majesty of the throne of Egypt!"

From the footstool of the royal canopy by which I stood, my view ranged over the vast plain which surrounded the palace. It was crowded as far as the eye could reach, with troops and people. Under the brightness of the ascending sun, this enormous extent of turbans and helmets, of spears gleaming in the rays, and of the scarlet and violet coloured robes of the people, looked like an immeasurable bed of tulips and roses, all animated with sudden life. The sight was such as Egypt alone could offer, and I exulted in its stateliness and beauty. I little dreamed then how soon all was to be shadowed with the colour of the grave.

But, as I looked the multitude seemed to be moved by some sudden, yet deep impulse: it heaved to and fro; it shook wildly; and cries of wrath, and shouts of contemptuous laughter, came mingled, even to the royal ears. But the cause remained a mystery, until the portals of the palace opened, and a band of the king's bearers of the bow came forward to the foot of the throne. As their circle opened out, within it were seen two ancient men. The king burst out into a haughty laughter at the sight of those two heads of the revolt. He cast his eyes round on the myriads of the troops of Misraim, and on the bold and armed circle of his princes, and said, "Do they war against us with the wind or the straws of their brick-kilns? Is it with the breath of children, or the white hairs of second childhood, that the eternal throne of the Pharaohs is to be confounded?"

The words were echoed and re-echoed round the circle; a smile was on every lip, and scorn in every heart. The two leaders of the rebellion seemed to all, fitter for the sepulchre than for the field. Both had reached that age when the body, though it were of iron, is melting into its original clay; and when the mind is but the memory of itself. Yet, there was a difference in their aspect. The younger was bowed by age; his locks, white as snow, were thin, and his limbs were feeble. The elder still retained something of the warrior. His port was erect, his step firm, and his eye that of the falcon; stately, bold, and endlessly gazing round on the multitude, he looked like one of the princes of the desert. His brother looked like one of the sages that in Babylon sit night by night under the date groves interpreting the stars. When he spoke his tongue seemed to refuse its utterance; he shrank from the king's presence, as overawed by its lustre, and timidly gave up the office of speaking before the king to his more fearless brother. Yet there was in his bowed form a dignity which threw the princes round me into eclipse, and in his faint and uncertain voice a tone which penetrated the bosom like the voice from an oracle.

The humility of their appearance saved them. A thousand axe-bearers stood behind the throne, who would instantly have sent their blood reeking into the earth, if Pharaoh had but given the sign. But, what was to be done with two old men? Were the axes of the king to be dipped in blood that was now pale with years?

"Are these the rebels?" Pharaoh demanded contemptuously of the captain of the archers.

"We are not rebels, O, king!" was the undaunted answer of the elder of the slaves. "We are the subjects of Egypt; yet neither by war, nor by our law, neither by our will, nor by the will of Him in whose hand are all things."

The sound of his powerful voice, the aspect of his vigorous form, which seemed endowed with a sudden majesty, hushed every murmur of the vast assemblage. As if by some powerful spell, the words were borne to the remotest edge of the multitude, and their tumult sank instantly into a silence like that of the grave. Even from that moment the wisdom of Zaph came to my mind, and I doubted. But the heart of the king was only as the fire while it sleeps among the roots of the forest. Bending from the height of the throne, with a glance of mock humility, he asked, what request those new freemen had to make to the king of Egypt. The answer was prompt and fearless. "We demand," said the ancient men, "that we shall be free; and that, as the first and noblest possession of freedom, we shall be suffered to worship the Lord of the Hebrews after the law of our fathers. And for this we demand to go forth with our people, our cattle, and our wealth, into the wilderness."

My eyes were fixed on the countenance of Pharaoh, as the words were spoken. It was as the flame of a furnace. Fury, scorn, and hatred, were struggling in every feature of his fierce visage. With a cry, he started from his canopy, and unsheathing his scimitar, rushed down to take vengeance with his own hand on the insulters of his rights and dignity. But this fate would have honoured them too highly. We threw ourselves round the furious king, and restrained him from an act which would have polluted his sword. A sign from Pharaoh, as we led him back, brought the thousand axe-bearers instantly into the midst of the multitude. All was flight and confusion at the flashing of those weapons which had laid low so many of the princes of Egypt, in the short duration of this merciless reign. The palace portals were instantly emptied of their multitude. But the two Hebrews still remained, utterly unmoved, and as if waiting to make some new appeal when the confusion had subsided.

"Strike them to the earth! Let the rebels be slain, and their flesh given to feed the fowls of the air!" was the command of Pharaoh.

The executioners rushed at them at the word, like the bloodhound upon the deer. Yet still they stood with their arms folded in their robes, and their calm eyes fixed upon heaven. A blaze of steel flashed against the sun as the weapons were raised with one impulse to strike. But no blow fell. They all remained suspended, as if by some preternatural impulse. I looked round the circle of princes; all was mute with wonder. I looked upon Pharaoh. His countenance was as the countenance of a man overwhelmed with a sudden sense of the horrors that were so soon to follow. His frame writhed with anguish, as if the arrow of affliction had gone through his soul. With a groan he cried out, "Let the slaves begone!" and fell on the ground convulsed with an agony never sent by man.

* * * * *

The day of the great festival of the Nile came. The multitude poured out of all their cities to worship the god of rivers, the glorious Nile, named in our sacred books "the Rival of the Heavens," the supplier of eternal waters, unborrowed from the fountains of the skies. I stood at the right hand of the throne, as was my place by virtue of my command. All was

the loveliness of those days when the infant year blushes with the first flowers, and veils them with the first tender foliage. The pomps of our ancient worship were displayed with a grandeur that awed the heart, and the riches of our people with a profusion that dazzled the eye. The royal maidens, the sacred tribe, who claimed the hereditary right of first drawing the sacred waters in their golden urns, and offering this purest of all tributes to the king; the virgin daughters of the heads of cities, cloathed in white and bearing censers of burning perfumes; the princes of the provinces in their war chariots, covered with precious stones; the whole dazzling and stately luxury of the most opulent land of the earth, spread out before the eye on the banks of the Nile. The river—hallowed and honoured be its name for all generations!—the life-giver of my beloved and famous land, looked, at that hour, worthy of all the homage of its worshippers. In this season, no floods from Ethiopian hills rushed down to tinge its beauty with the pollutions of earth; no sands torn up by the whirlwinds of the desert stained its bosom. Its blue expanse looked as if it sprung at the moment from the holy caves, where the spirits of the dead drink the waters of immortality. It was one calm sheet of crystal, one broad pellucid mirror of the cloudless heaven, calm as the prosperity of our land of luxuriance, and perennial as the fate which had commanded Egypt to be the queen of nations for ever.

I felt like an Egyptian at this sight of beauty, to which the world had no equal; and, when the king descended from his moving throne to throw the first garland, a garland of jewels worth the ransom of kingdoms, into the stream, I instinctively raised my voice among the bursts of song and triumph, which hailed, from the whole horizon around, the supremacy of the god of rivers. Even the sullen countenance of Pharoah was lighted up: he looked on the noble display with the pride of a king, and felt, in that moment, that his throne was mighty beyond the power of foreign evil or civil hatred to overthrow.

I followed his haughty and eager stride towards the borders of the sacred stream. But there stood an obstacle, which broke up all his visions. The two ancient leaders of the rebels stood on the verge of the Nile. The king, indignant at their presence, commanded them to be instantly slain, and their bodies burnt, as was the custom with those who were accused of insulting the dignity of our worship. But, among the crowd of spearman who rushed forward to perform his will, none could lay his grasp upon those feeble men. The spear-point hung helpless in the air; the uplifted arm was paralyzed.

While all stood in astonishment, the Hebrews spoke. They boldly demanded once more, that their countrymen should be suffered to take their journey into the Desert. The king scorned an answer, or gave no other than a fierce gesture to the guards once more to seize them. At that instant, the feeble of the two lifted his countenance from the earth for the first time. That countenance is before me still. It had an expression of loftiness and intense power, such as I had never seen in man. As he stood in silent prayer, his brother, without a word, waved his staff over the Nile. How shall I relate what I then saw! My soul still sickens and faints at the recollections. I had been a soldier from a youth up. I had fought from the valley of Misraim to the confines of India. I had seen armies stretched in their own slaughter. But, until that moment, I had never

seen, I had never conceived, a whole unbroken flood of carnage. The Nile, our lovely, our resplendant Nile, instantly rushed down before our eyes a torrent of blood—of actual blood—red, as if it had at that instant spouted from the heart of the warrior, but vast, as if the hearts of millions, and empires had been poured in its channel. The stream, too, was filled with living pollution. It had burst over its banks, and all that it reached died, as if its touch were poison. All perished; and its surface was covered with corpses, all rolling down to the sea. The fish died; the wild beasts, caught in their thickets by the sudden inundation, died; the priests, who had taken their stand on the verge of the sacred stream, were struck with pangs, as if they had plunged into a stream of molten ore. A vapour deadly as ever breathed from the charnel, uprose and darkened the banks to the horizon.

All was terror. The priests, the minstrels, the royal maidens, the multitude, were all driven madly into flight across the plain. Even there death seemed to pursue them; and, in the agonies of their fear, they cried out that the final hour of the world was come. Some saw the gigantic shapes of our ancient kings bursting the tomb, and reaping the human harvest with the sword. Others saw the serpent arms of the gods of Egypt stretched forth from their clouds, and grasping thousands and tens of thousands in folds of flame. I turned to the king. He was still gazing on the Hebrew leaders with the look of idiotic wonder. They answered not his gaze. Wrapped in their mantles from head to foot, they stood like statues, with their marble eyes upturned to heaven; they were holding high communion with their own thoughts, or perhaps, with mightier things than human thoughts. As I bore the king helpless and fainting from the field, I heard a voice: "This is for the blood of the children of the Hebrews."

The voice rang round the plain: it filled the air, it echoed in the forest. I heard it when the sun sank, and the moon shed her solemn light over the afflicted land. In the dead of the night, as I stood in my place by the door of the king's chamber, I heard that voice; and heard it answered by a groan from Pharaoh, as if an Arab shaft had passed through his bosom.

* * * * *

On the seventh morning, the trumpet sounded to proclaim to keep a solemn feast in the temple built by Psammis. The diviners had triumphed. The glorious river once more flowed in its crystal purity. The arm of the enemies of Egypt was shortened, and the land rejoiced in the firmness of her king. The Hebrews had demanded the freedom of our slaves in vain. Their insult to the majesty of the Egyptian's god had roused the vengeance of the nation, and, from this hour, double chains and tenfold toil were to be their portion. On this day the royal proclamation declared, that the recovered majesty of the river, worshipped under the mystic semblance of its creatures, was to be celebrated by all the lords of Egypt. In the train of Pharaoh, I entered the temple of the Nile.

When will the world see such structures again! In those vast arcades, those colossal ranges of columns, those boundless roofs that looked like the canopy of the midnight heavens; so far and so wide were they spread above our heads, the heart felt an instinctive sense of the littleness of man. The whole magnificence of the kingly procession now seemed to sink into the magnificence of motes in the sunbeam. Our long lines of priests and princes

were diminished into insects, glittering, indeed, with gold and gems, yet still but like the glittering of insects' wings. The clash of our timbrels, the rich uproar of our trumpets, the harmony of our hosts of harpers and singers, was lost in those immense and lofty spaces, like the evening sounds of the grasshopper. All was awful grandeur. We moved along, as if the bowels of some mighty mountain, which had let us into the secrets of its caverns to rebuke the pride of man.

At length, after winding through these superb recesses to the brazen gates of the central shrine, the priests advanced before all, to begin the rites. The flame of their perfumed torches was the only light, and the smoke of their censers rose, richly clouding that light, as it flashed against the sculptures of those sacred walls. Those sculptures were in themselves a wonder. There was wrought every creeping thing born of the great generating power of nature; every progeny of heat and moisture; every creature of the prolific soil of the Nile; terrible and strange in their shapes, thus shown by the mysterious light of the worship; more terrible and strange still as emblems of those fearful powers which rule the world of spirits, and appeal to the guilty dead with endless torment.

But at the moment of sacrifice, when Pharoah was setting his foot on the steps of the high altar, and the incense was already in his hand to be flung upon the blaze, the two Hebrews stood in his presence. In that hour I felt appalled. All around me was gloom, mystery, and awe. Even the lifeless shapes that by thousands and myriads were wrought out of the face of the rock might have appalled the heart. But at the sight of those two ancient men, thus standing unshaken in the very footsteps of the tyrant, I felt a preternatural consciousness of some unspeakable evil at hand. With the tone and aspect which had defied the king on the banks of the Nile, they now, in its temple, demanded the instant freedom of the multitudes of Israel.

But they were now far from the sacred stream which they had the power of polluting. They stood under the centre of that mighty temple which, to them, might be a dungeon; they were surrounded with spears and axes, from which there could be no escape. Pharoah's countenance, exulting in the conviction that his enemies had now rashly thrown themselves into his hand, exhibited all the haughty vindictiveness of his nature. "You demand freedom for your fellow slaves," said he; "first demand it for yourselves." The Jewish leaders were silent. "Well, freedom ye shall have. Before this foot stirs from the spot where I now plant it, ye shall both be free; free as the flame on yonder altar; free as the ashes of the guilty scattered into the air; free as the gust that wafts them, a sign to all traitors, rebels, for ever!"

As he spoke the word, two bands of the priesthood rushed forward; one to heap fire on the high altar, the other to seize the criminals and throw them into the flame. I shuddered at this horrible sentence, and flung my mantle over my head that I might not see their dying struggles. There was a total silence for a while. I raised the mantle. All was darkness: the furious blaze of the altar had sunk into a glimmer, but, by that expiring light, I could still see the two Hebrews, standing like the shades of the dead, with their pale and solemn faces sternly fixed on the king. At length I beheld the ominous staff lifted up and waved above the altar. Heavens! what a sight of terror followed! I saw from the embers, which had sunk

to their last spark, a volume of sudden fire burst forth, as if from the very entrails of a volcano. Broad gushes of lurid light that withered the eye shot up to the roof of the temple, and showed every frowning sculpture, every terrible emblem, every mystic motto hid in the endless tracery of those gigantic vaults, as distinctly as if the sun in his noon had broken through. And still the blaze from the altar spread, till all was conflagration. Founts and cataracts of flame, of every intense splendour, from sulphureous blue to the blaze that looked as if it passed through blood, darted, rolled, and whirled, round the walls, entwined every column, and coiled like myriads of enormous serpents, along every line and circle of the boundless architecture. All around us, all above us, was fire. Our eyes were dazzled with the glare; our ears were deafened with the roar. Round the foot of the altar a thick and deadly fume arose. It arose from a circle of ashes; the priests, who had stood within the sacred circle, had fallen victims on their own shrine. The flame had enwrapped them, and they were consumed bodily. In this cavern of fire there was now no sound but of the tremendous element that had mastered all. All were dumb with terror; king, priest, warrior, alike withered in soul, all prostrate before the majesty of Death.

From the ground I glanced once more towards the authors of our calamity. They were standing unmoved, unscorched, unterrified. Their hoary locks were even unwaved in the whirlwind, that swept the flame in resistless eddies through the whole range of the temple: At that moment I saw the staff lifted again. Thunder rolled, the walls shook, the flame swelled and volumed with tenfold fury round the walls; and, could I believe my failing senses; the very walls suddenly teemed with hideous life. Every sculpture moved and quivered; the innumerable tribes of reptiles, which labour of ages had carved in the granite, started into unhallowed vitality. The frog, the lizard, the viper, the scorpion, the toad, every loathsome shape of creeping things, the half-formed offspring of slime, the finned, the fanged, the hundred-footed, the poisonous, the pestilential, an endless crowd of those fearful sports of Nature, which in mercy, she conceals from the eye of man in the depths of the waters, all came forth to the light; all swelled to a size in itself revolting and frightful; all in hideous energy revelling, twining, hissing, and hanging their polluted clusters around. The nostrils turned away, the eye recoiled, the touch shuddered, the heart sank at the sight. Still, down they poured, as if the very walls were turned into their living substance; still they dropped, they sprang, they showered, from every spot of the mighty architecture. The curse of reptile life was come to the full upon its worshippers.

At length the very horror of the sight gave us strength. We started from the ground. The king dismayed, exhausted, and covered with the pallidness of the grave, made a desperate effort to escape, at least, into the day, if there he was to die. I followed his tottering steps. With indescribable difficulty we at last reached the portal of the temple. There we breathed—but no more. All before us was fear and flight. The land was, like the temple, moving with reptile life. Wherever the foot trod, it trod upon reptile life. Wherever the sight glanced, it was startled by some form of loathing. Egypt looked with double horror on the evil done by things which it had once placed on its altars. The food, the drink, the pillow, the hour of rising, the hour of going to rest, all was turned into loath-

ing: all was fierce repulsion, intolerable disgust, the unspeakable sickness of the senses and the soul. Still on they poured. We were flooded by the reptile tides. We crushed, burned, buried them in vain. They overwhelmed us by millions of millions. The sky seemed to rain them, the dust to engender them: every tree, every branch, every leaf, cast them forth, till the land grew poisonous; all the employments of human existence stopped, and men, in dying bitterness, cursed the day that they were born.

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New evils were at hand. Our frontier horsemen came flying in with news of war. The Arab chieftains had refused the tribute. They had sent round a banner to all the kindred of Ishmael in the Desert; and the whole border, from Damascus to Pelusium, was in arms, as if by a command of our evil genius. The calamities of Egypt had stirred them up to revolt; and the revolt was about to be followed by furious invasion. I was summoned to the council held in this emergency. The king demanded my advice. It was plainly given. Reprobating the feeble policy which had withdrawn our frontier armies, to waste their valour in watching slaves, I counselled instant vigour. I declared that war must be met by war, rebellion by speedy punishment; and that the royal tribute, if not brought in the hands of the Beni-Ishmael, must be sought for in the ashes of their tents. All applauded the advice: and Pharoah, throwing over my neck the golden links of his own sword chain, and ordering a jewelled robe of state, worth one of the provinces of Egypt, to be hung upon my shoulders, made me on the spot commander of all the armies of Misraim.

I rejoiced in this good fortune. The pomps of Memphis had become fearful in my sight. Wild dreams haunted me. Wilder thoughts came over me, like a cloud, in my waking hours. I had begun to feel strange doubts of the wisdom of that worship, which was as old as the foundations of the throne. I involuntarily asked myself, could the gods of Egypt be given for its tormentors? Could the power of turning those gods into scorn be given but by some God higher than they? Or, could that higher God, that wielder of the elements, that scorner of the glories and the pride of Egypt, be on the side of injustice? Those feelings rapidly spread over the whole surface of my mind. The sound of war came to me, as the sound of the rushing stream to the traveller in the Desert. The fever of my spirit parched me no more. I put on my armour, took my spear in my hand, and marched forth from Memphis at the head of troops that were fit to bear the dragon banner of Egypt to the end of the world.

We made rapid marches along the shore of the Sea of the Desert, that we might meet the rebellious sons of Ishmael before a hoof of their camels should defile the sacred soil of Egypt. All was the exultation of the warrior's heart, as I looked from the heights along the endless columns of chariots, horse, and spearmen, that moved among the bold hills and rocky valleys bordering that bright and ever billowy sea. But when we entered on the Desert itself; when we saw the boundless waste spread before us, without path or landmark, without tree or herb, without river or fount, our hearts died within us, and we felt that, in all the grandeur of man, there still is weakness, as the weakness of the sand tossed in the whirlwind. Enemy we saw none, but the most unconquerable of all enemies, the Desert;

the ground on which we trod, as treading on the floor of a furnace, and the sun, which shot down upon our heads rays as fierce as flights of burning arrows. Against this war what was man? Our horses died of pestilence; our chariots were left broken in the wilderness; the scorching wind pierced us to the bone, withered the nerve of the strong, and made the heart of the bold faint within him. After months of fruitless search for the flying Arabs, whom we could no more reach than we could the clouds of heaven, I gave the word to retrace our steps towards the land of Egypt. Broken and faint as we were, the command was new life to the whole host. It was full of the memory of that luxurious rest which the soul covets in a dry and thirsty land. It told even the meanest heart among our thousands of the pure and refreshing draughts of the Nile, the deep bowers of roses, the olive groves on its banks, the delicious evenings, when, under the vines, in the cool air, all was music, serenity, and the simple and undisturbed delights of nature.

By sunset of the third day, the army had reached the brow of the mountains that overlook the valley of the Nile. With the delight of weariness and famine in sight of rest and luxury, we gazed on the immense extent of that richest spot of the bounty of Nature and the labours of man, glittering, like a huge serpent, bright with all the hues of summer, under the light of the descending sun. Groves, gardens, palaces; the solemn beauty of the pyramids, illumined by the rays, like enormous piles of burnished gold; the Nile, the glory of all, floating down in the midst of this unrivalled landscape like a vast vein of molten silver; all lay before us in lovely vision. In universal triumph, we sent up hymns to the protecting gods of Egypt; raised rude altars of stones of the mountain tops; and, after hours of carousal, flung ourselves down to sleep, until the morn should bid us go forth into the richness of the land. It was then that I heard, for the first time, from the peasantry of the hills, the long succession of miseries that the wrath of the Hebrew leaders had laid upon my country. But, while those fell, I had been in the wilderness; and happy I now felt the days of toil and the nights of watching, the fiery wind and scorching sand, which had kept me far from a share in such agonies. Yet, where were their traces now? As if a superior hand had been held over Egypt, to shower fertility on it in recompense for its afflictions, all was now more luxuriant than ever,

My mind still remained disturbed with many thoughts; and, leaving my tent, I took my spear in my hand and walked forth into the moonlight, which was then lying broad upon the hills, and flooding the tents of my sleeping army with unspeakable lustre. I have never seen a night of such beauty. The sky was a sheet of living azure; the stars, thick as dew-drops on the leaves of the forest, sparkled and shot rays of living diamond; the moon was an orb of serene flame. The whole creation seemed to have assumed a more ethereal character. I could have thought that its grosser substance had been suddenly purified and changed into light and life. It was a night on which an irresistible impression of the presence of beings mightier than man, subdued the mind. In strange awe I prostrated myself, and offered up a supplication to the great invisible Lord, by whom all this world of wonders lived, to guide me into his knowledge: if the gods of Egypt were divine, to make me their more unfailing worshipper, but, if there were another, mightier than they, another, who bore no shape of cre-

ated thing, another, not to be worshipped by our fires, nor bowed down to in our temples, nor won by those sad and fearful sacrifices of human life, which Egypt had so long offered to the work of her hands; then, to let me be enlightened by the truth, let the idol have my homage no more, but let me bow down my spirit to the Spirit of Heaven.

When I lifted up my countenance again, a wondrous change had come. The moon was covered with the hue of blood, the stars had died. All below was dark as the grave. I looked round. My army was locked in a torpor as profound as if it had been drugged with opium. I alone was awake: and fearfully were my senses kept watching. It was midnight. At that moment, an echo, like the burst of a thousand trumpets, broke from the skies. It was followed by the charge of a tremendous army.—The skies opened, and showed flames that took the shape of horse and horseman, chariot and charioteer. A mass of living fire rushed down over Egypt. Leading all, and terribly conspicuous above all, was a form, whose gigantic wings seemed to spread from verge to verge of the horizon. Perpetual shafts of lightning darted from the path of the Destroyer, and a sword like an angry comet, waved and blazed before him up to the heights of heaven.

In the midst of these overwhelming terrors of the air I was recalled to the earth; she had her terrors too, in that night of vengeance. A cry as if the whole agony of the human heart and the whole concentrated affliction of an undone people could be poured on the ear at once, smote me.

I looked down on the long valley of Egypt. There all slumber was at an end. All was fierce and instant confusion. The multitude were rushing wildly, with torches in their hands, through the cities, as if seeking each other. Palaces, temples, cottages, all poured out their inmates; and all were filled with one vast echo of lamentation. That night was the slaying of the first-born! In every house, in every field, in every spot where human life could exist and be stricken, there was one dead. The eldest born of the throne, the infant in the dungeon; the heir of the mighty, to whose birth so many eyes looked forward as the last crown of the gods to the prosperity of the princes of the land, was a cold corpse; the heir of nothing but the poverty of his outcast father, was equally stricken. The first-born of the cattle in the field, of the sheep in the fold, of the bird in the grove, of the wild beast in the forest, all had fallen. Death had claimed his universal tribute, the first fruits of the land. In the midst of this mortal ruin a tempest rose. Furious blasts rushed from the clouds, that now gathered big with thunder. Rain, like cataracts, burst down, tearing up the fertility of the rich expanse of pasture and tillage, garden and bower beneath. Sheets of lightning that blinded the eye hung quivering over the palace roofs, and they dissolved into dust and ashes under the subtle intensity of the flame. Thunderbolts swept along the ground, and tore up the foundations of tower and temple. It was a night to be much remembered in Egypt.

In the midst of this convulsion of the storm, there came one evil more, the last aggravation of national ruin. In one of the lapses of the whirlwind, I heard the sound of the Desert horn. My blood curdled at the sound. I knew our fate. The Arab robbers were at hand. They had followed us by thousands from the wilderness, crouching like tigers; and had only

waited till the sight of our home should relax the bonds of discipline. They had waited with terrible wisdom; for the night found my army utterly incapable of resisting its wild and wily enemy. Riot, giddy triumph, and reckless indulgence, had cast them all at the feet of their pursuers. Vengeance was speedily sent forth among them. Hearts that never forgave, guided blows that never failed. Resistance, feeble from the first, soon degenerated into flight: but what was the flight of startled and terrified multitudes to the keen assault of the horsemen of the Desert, to the instant pursuit, to the iron nerve, to the practised and indefatigable determination of blood! It was no longer a battle, no longer a flight; it was a rout and a massacre. I vainly tried to stem this torrent of ruin. I vainly tried by hand and voice to collect together a few brave men, to rally the broken columns, to cover the last relics of the most splendid army of my country. All was lost. There was a spirit of infatuation sent forth among them, that drove them under the very swords of their destroyers.

The storm still raged. The thunders rolled as if they would rend up the mountains; the flashes from the clouds struck long paths through the forests on their sides, or kindled the thickets into boundless flame. Still the Arabs, as numerous as the locust, and as devouring, gleaned the soil of the last remnant of life, and rested only when there was no more to destroy of that renowned army. How I escaped I know not; whether by the chance that sometimes so strangely preserves, or by the protection of some diviner guardian. In the midst of the havoc I found myself carried fighting in a circle of enemies to the summit of the mountain pass. There double darkness shrouded all the world below from my sight, and there I sank disabled by wounds and intolerable fatigue. I thought that the hand of death was on me. Yet even in that hour I rejoiced that I had fallen, not in the intrigues of the palace; not in the dungeons which the jealousy of Pharaoh had filled with so many of the noble and the wise of Egypt; not in the hour of guilty excess; not in the hot pursuit of still guiltier ambition; but in the cause of my country. A soldier, I rejoiced in dying the death that does especial honour to a soldier's grave.

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The sun rose over a scene of unparalleled devastation. I found myself on the banks of the Nile. During the night, in my distraction, I had descended from the mountain ridge, and wandered madly, I knew not whither. On that ridge I had left my undone army; but I had not left them alone. The morning air was filled with endless flights of the devourers that make their prey of the fallen lords of the creation. The eagle, the vulture, the kite, the falcon, all came rushing in clouds to feast upon the dead. Never was such a banquet spread for them before. They fed on the hearts of the mighty; the flesh of princes were in their talons; their beaks were red with the gore of the chieftains and conquerors of Asia.

But a new and deep murmur, as of the sea, yet a voice of rejoicing, gathered upon the wind. It rapidly swelled; and I could soon distinctly trace the sounds of the Israelitish tongue. From the gates of Memphis to the foot of the hills all was in motion. As the increasing light penetrated through the vapours that rest so thickly at dawn upon the river, I could mark standards and weapons waving and flashing at the head of columns of

men, who seemed countless as the sand of the ocean. And those were the conquerors of Egypt! those were the masters of Pharoah in his pride and fury of heart; those were the preserved in the chain of the task-masters, in the war of the elements, in the terrible career of the destroying angel. As they advanced up the valley, by thousands and millions, rolling forward a continual living stream, their hymns ascended, like the sound of distant thunders, when the storm is dying away, and the earth begins to lift up her countenance again. They sang their deliverance, the praises of their king—'a King of Glory, who, high above all height, had yet looked down on the sorrows of his people; had brought them out of their place of sorrow; had broken off the fetters of two hundred years, and called them forth from the house of bondage.'

I was now sunk in the deepest human affliction. My dreams of human vanity were gone. I was a general without an army, a noble without a name, an Egyptian without a country. Still, with the spirit of loyalty strong in my soul, I felt that there was guilt upon that country. I had seen Pharoah in the intimate retirement of his court; and I had known him for a tyrant, remorseless, blind, and bloody. I had bowed myself down to our altars; but I had known the priesthood to be profligate, and the rites cruel. In the bitterness of my soul I acknowledged that the punishment of Egypt was righteous. And I cast the dust of affliction on my head, as I made the confession to the sun, that I now saw rising before me, and scattering his beams over the landscape in such cloudless beauty.

But, while I knelt, the multitude came rolling on, below the rock in whose shelter I shrank from the general eye. First advanced the few bearers of weapons, a bold and sinewy race; but rudely armed, to an eye which, like mine, had seen in succession all the glittering troops of the oriental world. Then followed the princes and elders of the tribes, the ancient sons of those twelve blessed by the blessing of increase, from whom the mighty host had flowed—grave and silver-haired councillors, fit to give the law to nations. Then came the innumerable multitude, the twelve tribes, under the banners of their chieftains, the future terrors of the regions of idolatry, with their household and their cattle, their camels, their oxen, and their sheep, laden with the produce of their harvests, the implements of their husbandry, and the wives, handmaidens, and infants, of the people. It was a moving nation, a whole kingdom suddenly rooted up from its foundations, and sent rolling on to crush all resistance, until it should fix itself in some distant land. Human nature never looked so magnificently powerful as in this universal movement; the heart of man never contemplated so calm yet so irresistible a display of those impulses which change the fates of empires. The eye of man never saw a sight so sublime as this infinite multitude, in all their myriads, advancing into the borders of the wilderness, boldly leaving behind them the land of fertility and loveliness, the land which had been native to them for generations, to march into the desert, where all was famine, maddening thirst, and superstitious terror.

On the rock at whose foot I lay, overpowered with emotions, fearful from their intensity, yet mixed with a strange delight from their grandeur, two stately men now ascended from the number of the elders, and stood, to issue their commands to the tribes as they successively approached. I at once

remembered the two Hebrew leaders. But they were not now as I had seen them before. I had seen them slaves in the presence of their king; victims in the grasp of power; supplicants at the footstool of a tyrant thirsting for their blood. I had seen them in all, dignified, calm, and resolute. Yet I had seen them in adversity. But now all was changed. They were in their hour of triumph. They had achieved the greatest work that the powers of Heaven ever gave into the hands of man—the freedom of an entire people. They had inscribed their names among the highest ranks of that roll which gives down the patriot and the hero to immortality. Yet, in those countenances, which I now saw gazing on the measureless current of human existence that flowed far and wide at their feet, I saw no human exultation. There was no touch of scorn for the defeated, none of pride for the conquest. All was joy; but it was the elevated joy of beings who could know mortal passion no more. Their features were filled with a sublime hope. Gratitude, never taught by man, gave a lofty and sacred animation to features originally formed in the mould of grandeur. They looked up to heaven and seemed to be filled with the spirit of heaven. They looked on earth, and seemed to reflect upon it the lustre which they had caught from the skies. I could have fallen at their feet and worshipped. I could have grasped the skirt of their robe, and felt virtue proceeding out of it into my heart. I could have kissed the dust on which their glorious footsteps trod, and bade them be my gods, and the gods of my children, and my children's children forever.

But I was yet only at the gates of the temple, that temple not built by hands; I was still an outcast idolater, an alien from the white-vestured family of the truth and the life. Yet my hour was not far off. While I still lingered in a tumult of contending thoughts, I heard the hymn of an advancing tribe; it was richer and more triumphant than the fullest song of triumph that I had heard among all the host. It told of victories to come, to which all the conquests of the sword were false and feeble; victories in which worlds were to be the prize, and which the universe was to witness; defeats of beings of terrible might and unwearied malignity, the fallen throne of the god of this world, the captive prince of the powers of the air; the triumph of beings whose rejoicing was to be forever; the sons of immortality, the elect of inscrutable wisdom, the heirs of the kingdom which shall shine when the diadems of earth are ashes, when the stars grow dim, and the fabric of the universal world shrinks and consumes like a garment in the flame.

In the midst of this tribe was borne, on the shoulders of a band of priests, a small temple. As it paused at the foot of the rock, the Hebrew leaders prostrated themselves, the priests prostrated themselves, and the whole multitude fell with their faces to the ground. All was sacred silence. A blaze, of a brightness exceeding the broadest intensity of the sun, exceeding the keenest flash of lightning, yet gentle and undazzling as the moonlight, stooped calmly down from the opening skies, and sat upon the temple, a pillar of splendour to the very heights of heaven.

In that moment of prostration its light seemed to enter into my inmost frame. The darkness of my soul was driven away like the mists of night before the sunbeams. In that hour I made my vow. It was irrevocable.

I threw myself at the feet of the holy leaders of the people, and implored them that I might be suffered to follow their path through the world. The altars of my country stood before my thought, and were from that instant an abomination to my soul. The people rose from the ground again. The hymn began. The march moved onward. I plunged into the first rivulet that wound across the plain, and mystically washed away with its water all the impurities of my old nature. I was thenceforth an Israelite! I worshipped the King of Kings! and, with a broken spirit, yet with a rejoicing heart, I gave the last look to Egypt, and followed the chosen people into the Wilderness.

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